

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process of treating or alleviating the symptoms of a pathological condition in which bone density is decreased which comprises inhibiting, in a mammalian patient suffering from such a condition, the formation of a tertiary complex of IL-11, IL-11R, and gp130.
2. The process of claim 1 which comprises administering to the patient an effective amount of a substance which inhibits, *in vivo*, the formation of a tertiary complex of IL-11, IL-11R, and gp130.
3. The process of claim 2 wherein the pathological condition is postmenopausal bone loss.
4. The process of claim 2 wherein the substance is a mutant IL-11R.
5. The process of claim 4 wherein the substance is a mutant IL-11R with at least one mutation in its gp130 binding region.
6. The process of claim 5 wherein the substance is a mutant IL-11R having at least one of the following mutations: D282→G282, A283→D283, G286→D286, H289→Y289, and V291→L291.
7. The process of claim 6 wherein the substance is a mutant IL-11R having the mutation H289→Y289.
8. The process of claim 6 wherein the substance is a soluble mutant IL-11R.
9. The process of claim 8 wherein the mutant IL-11R is a human IL-11R.

10. The process of claim 2 wherein the substance is an anti IL-11 antibody.
11. The process of claim 2 wherein the substance is an IL-11 binding peptide.
12. The process of claim 11 wherein the substance is an IL-11 binding peptide having an amino acid sequence which specifically binds IL-11 in the region normally bound by IL-11R.
13. The process of claim 12 wherein the substance is a peptide comprising the sequence Arg Arg Leu Arg Ala Ser Trp .
14. The process of claim 2 wherein the substance is a small molecule.
15. The process of claim 2 wherein the substance is an IL-11 antagonist.
16. The process of claim 2 wherein the substance is an IL-11R binding peptide.
17. The process of claim 2 wherein the substance is an anti IL-11R antibody which inhibits interactions between IL-11 and the IL-11R.
18. The process of claim 2 wherein the substance is an anti IL-11R antibody which inhibits interactions between IL-11R and gp130.
19. The process of claim 1 which comprises administering to a patient an effective amount of transcribable genetic material which causes inhibition of the formation of the tertiary complex of IL-11, IL-11R, and gp130.

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20. The process of claim 19 wherein transcribable genetic material encodes an RNA sequence capable of inhibiting the translation of a component necessary to the formation of the IL-11 / IL-11R / gp130 tertiary complex.
21. The process of claim 20 wherein the transcribable genetic material comprises DNA encoding an RNA sequence complementary to IL-11 mRNA.
22. The process of claim 20 wherein the transcribable genetic material comprises DNA encoding an RNA sequence complementary to IL-11R mRNA.
23. The process of claim 20 wherein the transcribable genetic material comprises DNA encoding an RNA sequence complementary to gp130 mRNA.
24. The process of claim 19 wherein the transcribable genetic material comprises DNA encoding an amino acid sequence capable of inhibiting the formation of the IL-11 / IL-11R / gp130 tertiary complex.
25. The process of claim 24 wherein the transcribable genetic material encodes an IL-11R mutated to inhibit binding to gp130.
26. The process of claim 24 wherein the transcribable genetic material encodes an IL-11 binding peptide.
27. A composition of matter comprising a mutant IL-11R.

28. The composition of claim 29 in which the mutant IL-11R has at least one of the following mutations: D282→G282, A283→D283, G286→D286, H289→Y289, and V291→L291.
29. The composition of claim 30 in which the mutant IL-11R has the H289→Y289 mutation.
30. The composition of claim 28 wherein the mutant IL-11R is soluble.
31. The composition of claim 29 wherein the mutant IL-11R is a human IL-11R.
32. A composition of matter comprising an IL-11 binding peptide or an IL-11R binding peptide.
33. The composition of claim 32 wherein the peptide is an IL-11 binding peptide comprises the sequence Arg Arg Leu Arg Ala Ser Trp.
34. The composition of claim 32 wherein the peptide is an IL-11 binding peptide comprises the sequence Arg Arg Leu His Ala Ser Trp.
35. The composition of claim 32 wherein the peptide is an IL-11 binding peptide comprises the sequence Arg Arg Leu X Ala Ser Trp, and X is a basic amino acid.
36. The composition of claim 32 wherein the peptide is an IL-11 binding peptide comprises the sequence Ser Ile Leu Arg Pro Asp Pro Pro Gln Gly Leu Arg Val Glu Ser Val Pro Gly Tyr Pro.

37. The composition of claim 32 wherein the peptide is an IL-11 binding peptide comprises the sequence Ser Ile Leu Arg Pro Asp Pro Pro Gln Gly Leu Arg Val Glu Ser Val Pro Ser Tyr Pro.

5 38. The composition of matter of claim 32 immobilized on an appropriate substrate.

39. The composition of matter of claim 32 consisting essentially of an IL-11R binding peptide.

10 40. A composition of matter useful in inhibiting IL-11 / IL-11R interactions comprising an antibody which specifically binds the IL-11R and blocks interactions between IL-11 and IL-11R.

15 41. A composition of matter useful in inhibiting IL-11R / gp130 interactions via the gp130 binding site on IL-11R comprising an antibody which specifically binds the IL-11R and blocks interactions between gp130 and IL-11R.

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